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Tilburg University

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Published in:
Libri: International Library Review and IFLA Communication

Publication date:
1994

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal

Citation for published version (APA):
Geleijnse, J. P. J. (1994). Campuswide information services at Tilburg University. *Libri: International Library Review and IFLA Communication*, *44*(4), 272-278.

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Libri 26419/87

Libri 1994: vol. 44, no. x, pp. 000–000
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Libri
ISSN 0024-2667

Campuswide Information Services at Tilburg University

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In December 1993 Tilburg University, The Netherlands, and Elsevier Science started a project with respect to the full text electronic delivery of journal articles. Users will be able to browse through articles from their desktop and make prints of relevant articles.

Several research issues which are of importance both for the publisher and for the library are part of the project. It is a next step in the campus-wide electronic information provision at Tilburg University. The university created a well elaborated IT infrastructure and was already able to integrate library services with other computing facilities on 2000 desktop PCs.

Introduction

In this paper I would like to focus on current projects at Tilburg University, The Netherlands, and on new deliverables in the area of electronic document delivery and document browsing in the end-user environment.

In the last couple of years library innovation was focused on campus wide access to a variety of local and remote bibliographic and reference databases. In December 1993 Elsevier Science and Tilburg University agreed to start an experimental project with respect to the full text electronic delivery of journal articles.

This unique experiment in Europe fits completely in the strategic plan of the University to make full use of new information technologies and to provide campus wide access to electronic information in order to facilitate education and research in a new and better fashion.

Tilburg University is a university focusing on the humanities and the social sciences and with a limited number of faculties: economics, social sciences,

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law, arts and philosophy. At present more than 10,000 students are enrolled. Total staff number is 1,600. The University has set itself the firm goal to achieve and maintain a top quality ranking for all faculties both in teaching and in research. These goals should be supported by modern library and information services.

The university library holds a collection of approximately 700,000 volumes and has 2,500 current journal subscriptions. At present 60 fte staff are employed. Since the early stage of library automation, the library has enjoyed a close and fruitful cooperation with the computer centre.

Present situation

In 1989 the University started a program in order to innovate information services and provide support to the process of learning, teaching and research in a new fashion.

With the wholehearted support of the Board of Governors of the University and in close cooperation with the computer centre and with Digital Equipment a program was developed with four key elements:

* to make full use of new information technologies in order to improve library services ;
* to provide electronic access to information from the desktop of university students and staff ;
* to emphasize desktop integration. The online library information should be integrated with communication facilities, facilities for document production and educational programmes ;
* to provide all services campuswide .

In 1992 a new library was completed and opened. The first results of this programme could be offered to the end-users.

An essential aspect of the program was the need for a well elaborated computer infrastructure.

For some years the University has implemented a coherent IT infrastructure with Ethernet connections in all rooms and FDDI backbone connecting the different departments of the University.

Novell and the network protocol TCP/IP are used to realize the network facilities.

There are currently 400 student PC's in the library, 200 PC's for students in class rooms and 1400staff PC'c in various departments connected to all services. All these PC's have a 80386SX or 80486 SX processor, super VGA, using MS-DOS 5.1 and the graphic user interface MS-Windows 3.1.

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This broad implementation is unique because it offers a number of different computing services. The KUBGuide gives access to the local catalogue, other inhouse library databases, other Dutch OPACS, Internet-access and access to a Campus Wide Information System. Also available on the 2000 desktop computers are networked CD-Roms, Interactive instruction programs, Word-Perfect, Harvard Graphics, QuatroPro, dBase, SPSS, SAS, FTP, Electronic Mail and Print service, and others in an integrated fashion.

An important advantage of the integrated desktop is that the user can import information from local and remote (library) databases (using the »cut and paste« techniques) into his text, thesis, or article. In addition, information from different sources, inhouse databases, external databases, CD-Roms, can be downloaded and printed.

In this way library and computing services facilitate the process of education and research. Staff and students can retrieve information, download it and work on it, use it in the production of new papers and articles, and communicate with each other electronically to discuss results and progress.

Current projects

At this time three main subjects are being emphasized:

1. The improvement of the user interface
2. Knowledge navigation
3. Electronic documents availability on the network.

Ad 1. The user interface

At this moment at Tilburg University we have to deal with different user interfaces, with different retrieval systems for our OPAC and our various inhouse reference databases.

In order to improve the graphical user interface and deal effectively with both bibliographic databases and image databases in the end-user environment the Mercury software from Carnegie Mellon University (which is running on Unix workstations) is currently being tested and adapted to the Tilburg situation (MS-Windows PC's), using the client-server architecture and the Z39.50 protocol. This protocol is going to be a standard for access to heterogeneous databases.

This project is being done in cooperation with Digital Equipment.

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Ad 2. Knowledge navigation

Users can access information which is available on the network, information which is stored in the University library and information which is stored remotely.

For the users it is very important to locate the real valuable information and to receive proper information for a specific problem or question.

Libraries should help the users to solve their information problems. Tools should be developed which select and detect relevant information in the present information chaos.

An electronic navigator is now being developed in order to help the user to identify both sources available in the library and in various internal and external databases which can be accessed from the end-user workstation in the University.

Ad 3. Electronic documents

The third subject focuses on electronic documents and on the development of tools for handling these documents.

Tilburg University is currently developing a Document Delivery Server in cooperation with Pica in the framework of the national RAPDOC project. In this national project Pica and 18 university libraries and major public libraries cooperate in order to speed up the delivery of documents, i.e. journals articles requested in the Dutch Inter Library Loan system. At this stage the project focuses on 10,000 journal titles (covering 90% of the ILL requests) and aims at a delivery within 24 hours, first by mail or fax, at the end of this year electronically. For that reason local servers will be installed in the major libraries.

The local Document Delivery Server should be able to communicate with:

- the local OPAC or reference database
- the local library system in order to identify the users
- a central Online Contents reference database
- the National Catalogue and the Interlibrary loan system
- other Document Servers installed in other libraries
- a scanning workstation
- a printerstation
- the end-user workstation.

The system has an important management component which can be used to check accounts and to execute financial transactions.

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With respect to the **content** of the network traffic and the improvement of the services for the end-user, Tilburg University is now focusing on three projects:

a. A full text database with **grey literature**, non-copyright material, and research papers produced by the faculty of the University; this project will be done in cooperation with the University of Maastricht.
b. The creation of a **coloured image bank** in the framework of the Elise project coordinated by De Montfort University, Leicester, UK.
c. A full text image database of **journal articles**, which is a pilot project in cooperation with a publisher. On this project I will give some additional information.

Full-text Experiment with Elsevier Science Publishers

In 1991 Tilburg University started to develop its own Online Contents database of the bibliographic information of 1800 current scientific journals present in the library, using the techniques of scanning and Optical Character Recognition.

At the same time a pilot project was started in cooperation with Elsevier Science Publishers on CAPCAS, Computer Aided Production – Current Awareness Service.

Elsevier delivered tapes with SGML-encoded bibliographic information and abstracts on current Elsevier journals mapped with the library holdings.

These two information sources have been integrated.

In December 1993 Elsevier Science and Tilburg University agreed to start a new pilot project on the full text of about 100 Elsevier journals to which the library subscribes.

The goal is :

* to enable our end-users on campus – by the end of 1994 – to make print-outs on their department printer of relevant articles which will be sent to them over the network;
* to enable end-users on campus – by January 1995 – to browse through the full-text images and to retrieve them on their work-stations.

To achieve these goals other projects like the Document Delivery Server and the adaptation of the Mercury software are of vital importance.

Important research issues will be:

* to create an interface between the bibliographic information and the

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specific image of the requested article, in other words an interface between the reference database and the image database;

* to monitor the use of these services and user behaviour; this is not only relevant to the publisher, but also to the library. The library will have more management information on the use of its journals when the information can be accessed electronically;
* to test an economic model. It is clear that the library has to respect the legal rights of publishers and make fair use of their licences. Both for the library and for the publisher it is of great importance to make clear agreements on this issue and to examine the cost-effectiveness of licensed electronic journals.

Some final remarks

It is obvious that new developments with respect to information technology will change the information cycle dramatically. Users will be able to access information, bibliographic databases but also primary sources wherever they are located without visiting a library. The monopoly of the library as the gateway to information is, thus, threatened.

Libraries have to anticipate these developments and make full use of the strengths of libraries and librarians: the disclosure of (online) information, the packaging of information coming from various sources, the development of tailor-made services, and the support of users in solving their information problems. These problems have to be solved in cooperation with other libraries and with other actors in the information chain, in particular the publishers.

In this cooperation both parties will have to agree on standardization. For the publishers SGML is going to be a *de facto* standard, libraries will have to emphasize protocols like Z39.50 and GEDI (on electronic document interchange).

Cooperation with publishers and agreements on campus wide licences will enable libraries both to have a proper disclosure of journal articles through bibliographic information, keywords and abstracts and to give an immediate online access to the full text of the articles. In this way the gap between the secondary information and the primary information can be diminished. These new electronic services create opportunities to develop tailor-made services for specific user groups who will be able to determine and select relevant information more efficiently and more effectively.

In this way the technological developments will not be a threat to libraries but an opportunity.

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